

TESTIMONY OF REP. JIM COSTA (CA-16)
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
Members' Day Hearing

I'd like to thank the Chairman and the Ranking Member for holding this Members' Day Hearing.

Today I am here to testify about our nation's water infrastructure as this committee has jurisdiction over our nation's water resources.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to specifically bring attention to the fact our infrastructure as a nation received a D+ from the American Society of Civil Engineers' in 2017. Let me repeat that again: A D+. This was the same grade our infrastructure received in 2013. Our nation's dams and levees fall into this category.

We are only going to continue to see the adverse effects of climate change and we must be able to mitigate them through smart and efficient infrastructure planning and improvements.

In my home state of California, we continuously run into this problem when it comes to attempting to enhance our water infrastructure. This endless struggle over imbalance of water resources for the state continues to be debated. As the climate continues to change, we must update our laws to reflect our new reality.

This committee, of which I have the honor to serve on, has jurisdiction over the lifeblood of the San Joaquin Valley: water.

The water infrastructure of the Central Valley Project operated by the Bureau of Reclamation forms the foundation of our local economy. The safe, reliable water supply it delivers irrigates the farms that drive the economy and quenches the thirst of our communities. But this infrastructure has been allowed to age and has not kept up with our state's growing population and changing demand.

Droughts are becoming more severe, floods are becoming more impactful, and the resources of our communities are continually strained as a result.

Now more than ever we need the Natural Resources Committee to act, in a bipartisan and constructive manner to invest in our water storage, conveyance, and conservation to meet the current and future needs of our Valley.

Specifically, we should support and extend the water infrastructure projects authorized by the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act – or WIIN Act

We need to address the capacity-killing subsidence issues on the Friant-Kern Canal. We need to fund the San Luis Dam seismic retrofit and we need to address the rehabilitation of the infrastructure at Mendota pool. Del Puerto, Los Vaqueros, Sites Reservoir. These are all projects that are ready to go with real benefits to the people of California.

We are living off the investments of previous generations which were designed for a much different world. Now, we should encourage the development of climate-resilient technologies. And we should expand federal financing for new water projects.

I know it is possible to work toward goals like this because we've done it before.

Let's get this done, the future of our communities depends on it.